COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE – SF424
STATE COMMISSION AND AMERICORPS PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATIONS

3.1 Overview

This chapter applies to

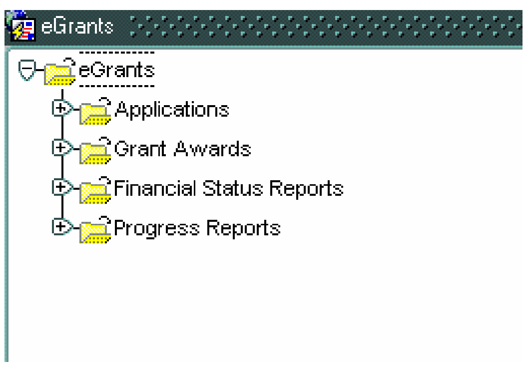
AmeriCorps State applications being submitted to a state commission, and
National Direct, National Education Award, Tribal, Territorial, South Dakota, and National Promise Fellow applications being submitted directly to the Corporation.

All organizations requesting funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service must complete the **Application for Federal Assistance (SF424)**. The program to which you apply will determine the application requirements and deadline. Refer to the appropriate AmeriCorps or State Commission application guidelines for specific application instructions and deadlines.

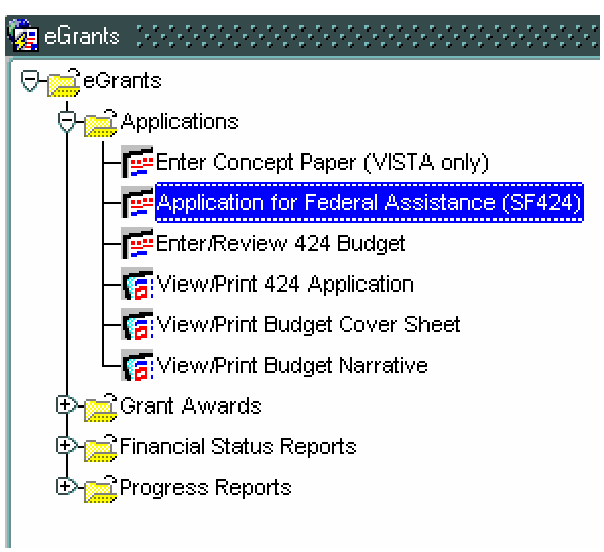
To access the **Application for Federal Assistance (SF424)**:

1. Log into *eGrants.*

2. From the *eGrants* menu tree, click on the **Applications** node (plus sign next to the folder).



Open the **Application for Federal Assistance (SF424)** (double click).



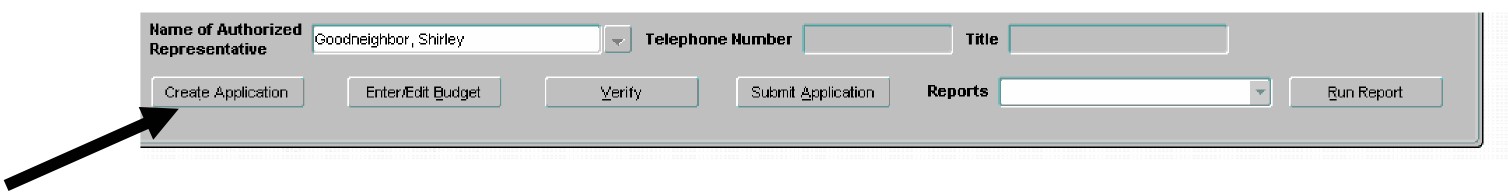
Information on Your Previous Grants from the Corporation

The Corporation has transferred information about current and former grants from its other databases in *eGrants*. As a result when the Application for Federal Assistance (SF424) opens, you may see data in the fields if you previously received a grant from the Corporation. If you see incorrect information, or the words "conversion" or "conversion data" in text boxes, this is due to the conversion process and does not need to be corrected. As you create a new application, you will be able to ensure that all information is correct.

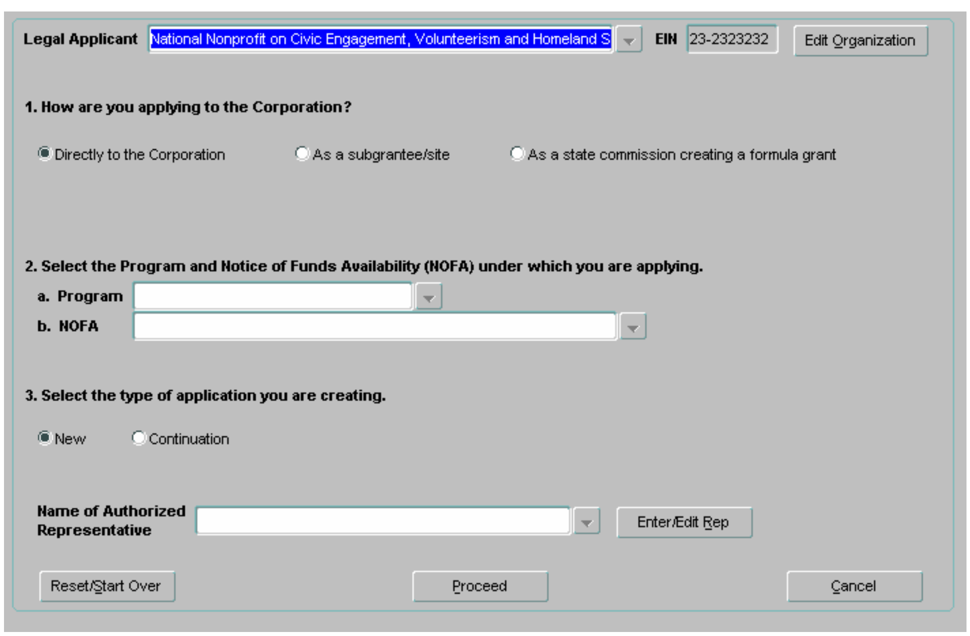
If your organization has had a previous grant with the Corporation, the information from the old grant may have been pre-loaded into *eGrants*. If this is the case, check the project information displayed on the screen to make sure it is yours. If another project's information from your organization is displayed, use the blue arrows on the tool bar to scroll through the records to find your project information.

3.2 Starting an Application

To begin your new application, press the **Create Application** button at the bottom left corner of the screen.



A pop-up window is displayed. The *Legal Applicant* and *EIN* fields are filled in with your organization's information.



The pop-up window asks for the following information:

1. ***How are you applying to the Corporation?***

    a) **Directly to the Corporation** – If you are applying directly to the Corporation, select this option. ***(This option applies to all National Direct, South Dakota, Tribal, Territorial, and national Education Award Program applicants, as well as to State Commissions completing a competitive application.)***

    b) **As a subgrantee/site** – Only select this option if you are applying to a state commission. You will be referred to as a subgrantee in eGrants and in this document.

    c) **As a state commission creating a formula grant** – If you are a state commission creating a formula application, select this option.

2. ***Select the Program and Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) under which you are applying.***

a) To select the type of program, click on the inverted arrow (pull-down menu button) and select **AmeriCorps**.

b) The NOFA is the grant or funding to which you are applying. It is critical that you select the appropriate Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), otherwise you will have to begin your application again.

    Click on the inverted arrow (pull-down menu button) and select the NOFA to which you are applying, as listed in your application instructions.

3. ***Select the type of application you are creating.***

    a. **New** – If you are applying for a new grant, select this option. (New = first year of a three year grant).

    b. **Continuation** – If you are a current grantee applying for the second or third year of funding within a 3-year grant, select this option. You will be prompted to select the current grant number.

    c. **Amendment** – If you are an existing grantee proposing any changes in your budget or requesting a no-cost extension to a current grant, select this option. You will be prompted to enter the current grant number and the type of amendment requested (augmentation, budget revision, or no-cost extension).

4. ***Name of Authorized Representative.*** The authorized representative is the person from your organization who will electronically sign your application's assurances and certifications. By default, your name appears in the **Name of Authorized Representative** field. If you are not the authorized representative, click the drop down menu for other choices. If the appropriate name is not in the list, the *Grantee Administrator* can add the name to the database. The Authorized Representative will need to create a personal eGrants account in order to log in

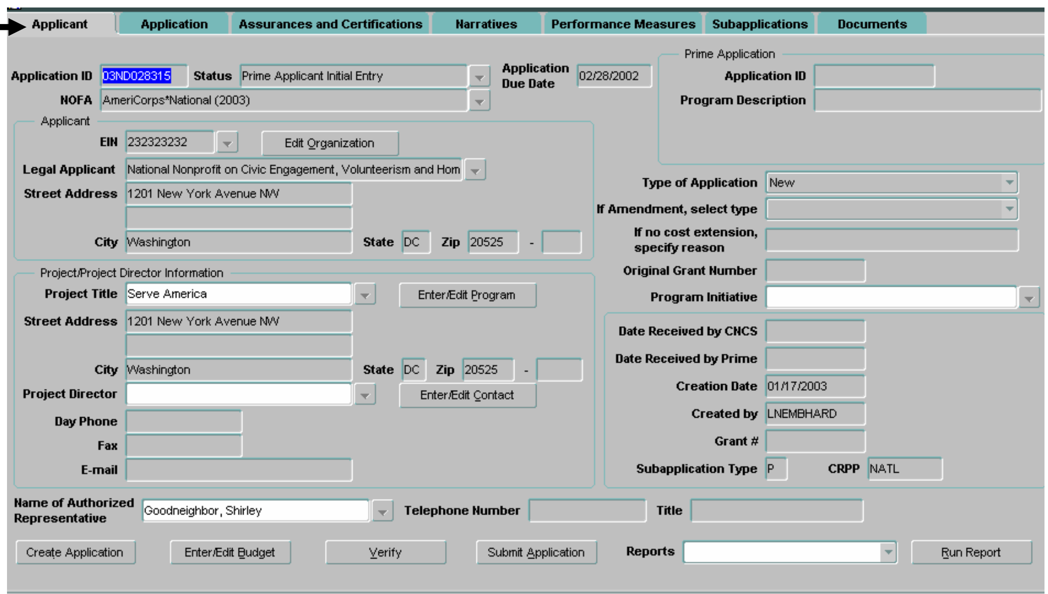
and certify the application. If the person is not listed, click on the “Enter/Edit Rep” button to enter the person’s name.

5. To continue with your application, press the **Proceed** button on the bottom of the pop-up window. You will receive an alert notifying you that your application has been saved, and providing you with your **Application ID number**.

Make a note of your Application ID number (also found in the top left of your screen). This is a unique identifier that is helpful when retrieving your application later or when seeking assistance.

6. You are now looking at the SF424 Application for Federal Assistance that you will be completing.

Tabs



There are several **tabs** within the application. These include the Applicant, Application, Assurances and Certification, Narratives, Performance Measures, Subapplications (only applicable to state commission sub-applicants and national direct applicants) and Documents Tabs. Clicking on each of these tabs will provide you with a screen for completing each portion of the Application.

Note that there is no Budget Tab. The budget is accessed through the “Enter/Edit Budget” button at the bottom of the Applicant Tab.

The next sections include instructions for completing each tab, entering the budget, and submitting the application.

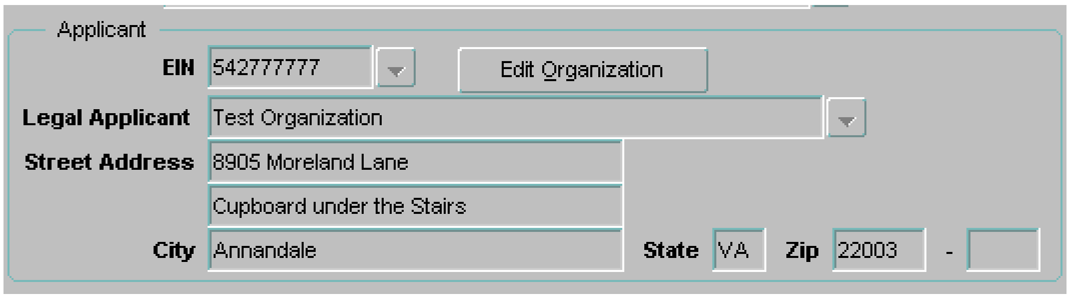
You may continue completing your application now or return to it later.

3.3 Applicant Tab

The first tab of the **Application for Federal Assistance (SF424)** is the **Applicant Tab**. Some of the information in this tab was automatically completed from the information you input when you started your application (see section 3.2).

3.3.1 Applicant (Organization) Information

This section will already be completed with your organization's EIN and address. If you need to make changes to the information displayed, press the "**Edit Organization**" button and make the necessary changes. Once the changes are made, press "**Save**".

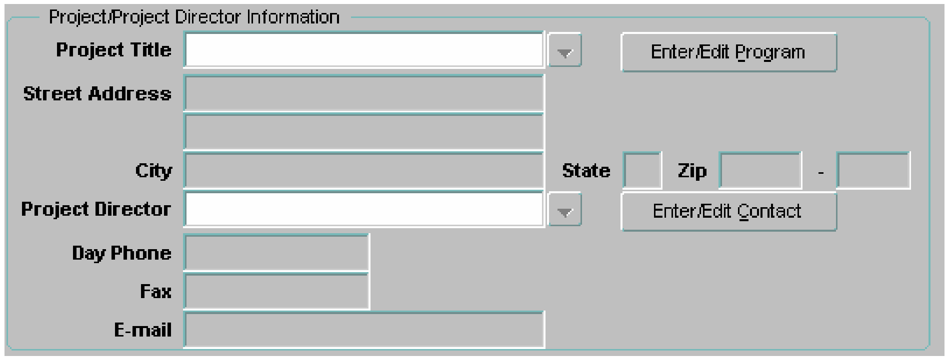


3.3.2 Project/Project Director Information

This section is used to provide information about the AmeriCorps project for which you are requesting funding.

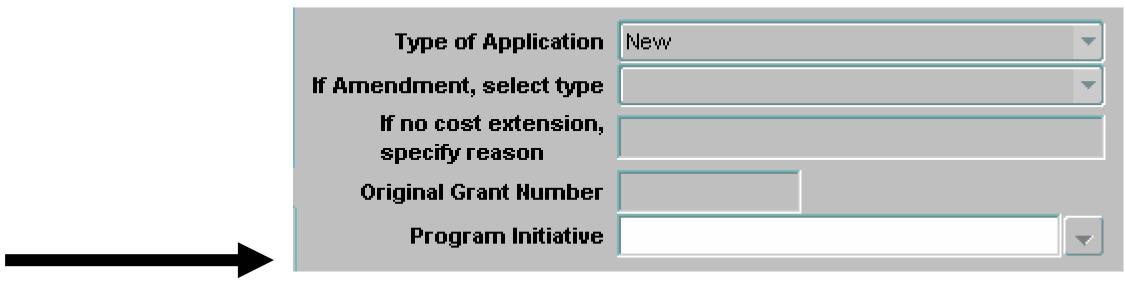
3.3.2.1 Project Title – If you have grant applications on file with the Corporation under your current EIN, you may select the project name from those on file. To do this, click on the arrow and select the project from the drop down menu. Press the "**Enter/Edit Program**" button to verify or update the project's address. If the project title is not listed or you are proposing a new project, press the "**Enter/Edit Program**" button. Enter the project information and save.

3.3.2.2 Project Director – If the project director is on file under the current EIN, you may select the project director's name from those on file. To do this, click on the arrow and select the project from the drop down. If the project director is not listed or it is a new project director, press the "**Enter/Edit Contact**" button. Enter the project director's information and save. In the case of State Commissions, the Executive Director is the "Project Director".



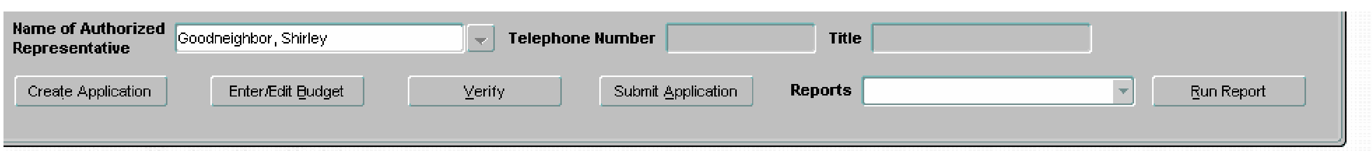
3.3.3 Program Initiative

This field is located to the right of the screen. Select a program initiative from the drop-down list if your application instructions instruct you to do so.



3.3.4 Action Buttons

There are 5 action buttons on the **Applicant Tab**. Each is used at various points in the application process to begin or complete an action.



3.3.4.1 Create Application –This button allows you to begin a new application. See Section 3.2 “Starting an Application” for more details.

3.3.4.2 Enter/Edit Budget –This button opens the budget in order for you to begin entering or editing your budget. See Section 3.9 “Budget” for details on completing your application budget.

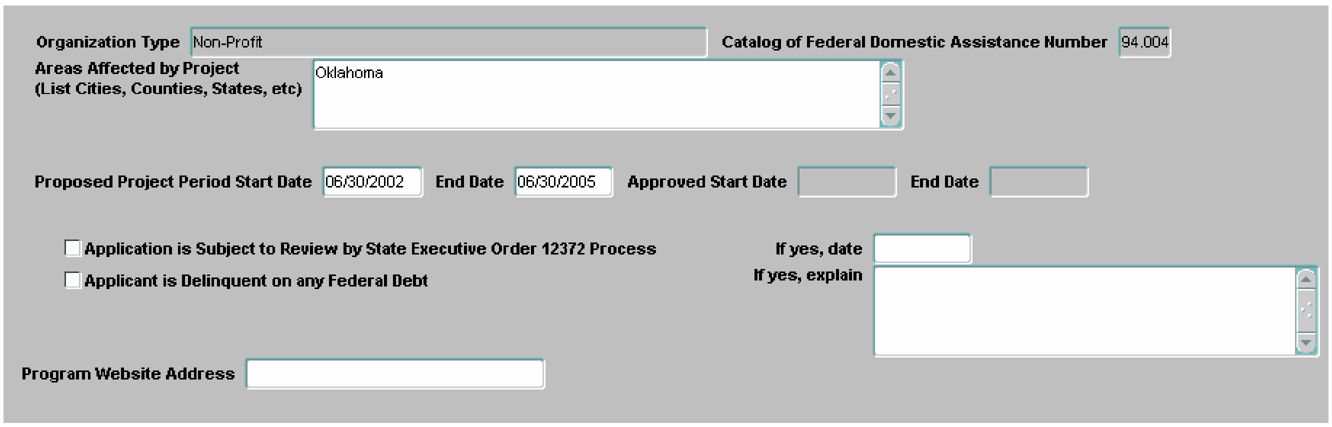
3.3.4.3 Verify – This button allows you to verify that your application has been completed correctly. See Section 3.10 “Submitting Your Application” for more details.

3.3.4.4 Submit Application – This button submits your application to the Corporation. See Section 3.10 “Submitting Your Application” for more details.

3.3.4.5 Run Report – This button allows you to view your application in its entirety. See Section 3.10 "Submitting Your Application" for more details.

3.4 Application Tab

The **Application Tab** is the second tab of the Application for Federal Assistance (SF424). Complete the following information for your application.



3.4.1 Areas Affected by Project – List all the geographic areas that your project will serve, using cities, counties, and/or states.

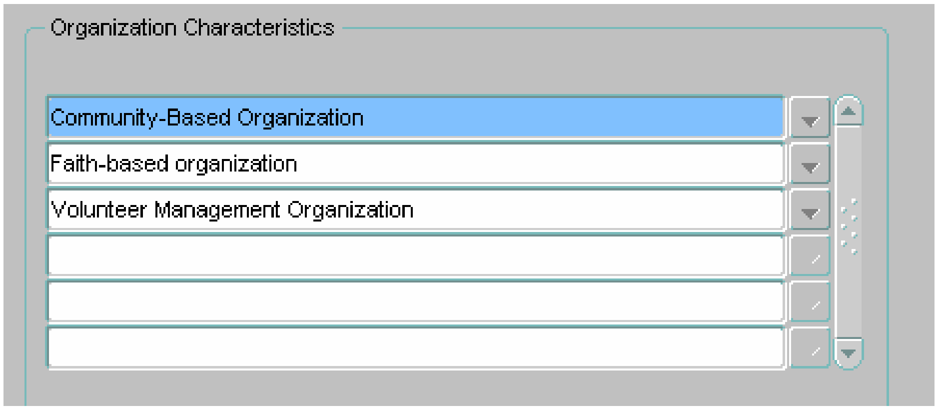
3.4.2 Proposed Project Period Start and End Dates – Enter the proposed start and end dates for your project.

3.4.3 Application is Subject to Review by State Executive Order 12372 Process – This question is not applicable to AmeriCorps State and National programs. Please leave blank.

3.4.4 Applicant is delinquent on any Federal debt – Check this box if your organization is delinquent on any Federal debt including federal tax or non-tax debts. If you indicate yes, you must enter the date, and an explanation.

3.4.5 Program Website Address – Enter your project's website address, if applicable.

3.4.6 Organization Characteristics – Enter the characteristics of your organization by clicking on the arrow to the right of each field and selecting from the drop down menu. Organization characteristics that have previously been entered will already be displayed. Select as many characteristics as apply. If you have more than 6 characteristics, place the cursor in one of the fields and click on the *Insert New Record* icon on the tool bar (green + sign). A blank field will appear. Repeat until all characteristics for your organization are listed.



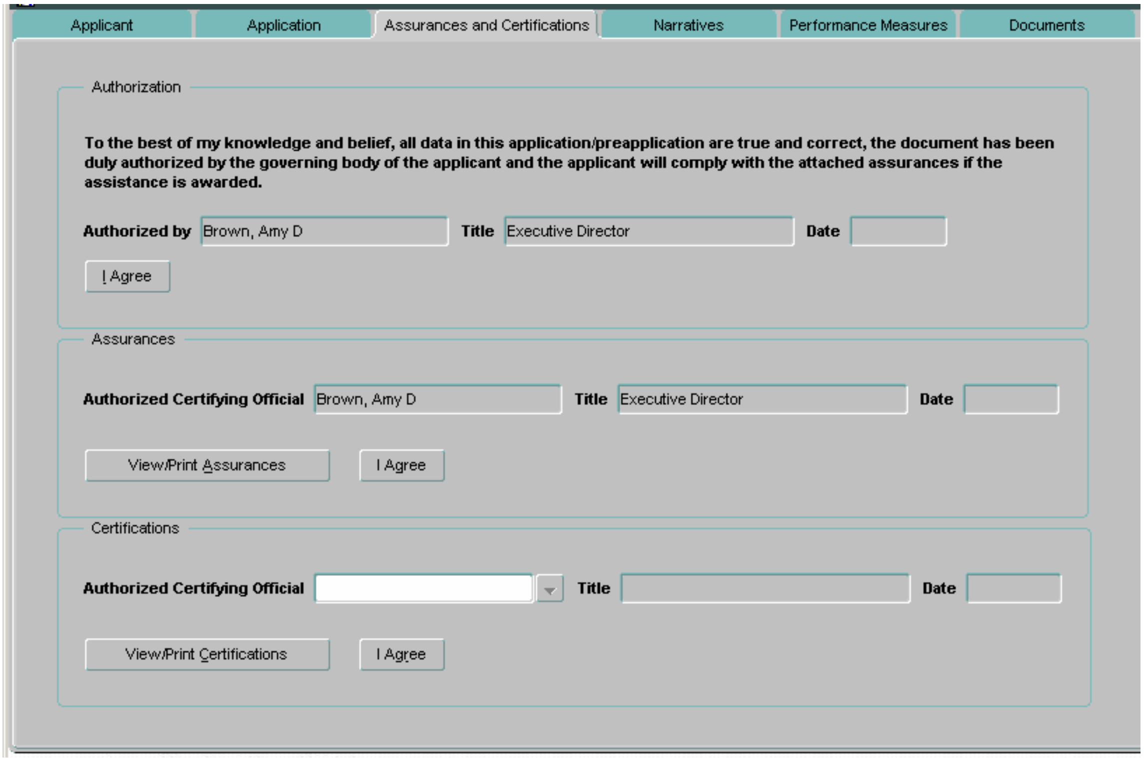
3.4.7 Estimated Funding

The Estimated Funding fields will be automatically filled in after you enter your organization budget.

3.5 Assurances and Certifications Tab

The **Assurances and Certifications Tab** allows applicants to agree to perform all actions and support all intentions in the Authorization statement and in the Assurances and Certifications documents. Your authorizing and certifying official(s) must view and electronically sign the assurances and certifications in this tab ***before the application can be submitted***.

The person logged into eGrants at the time the assurances and certifications are electronically signed must be the authorizing official.

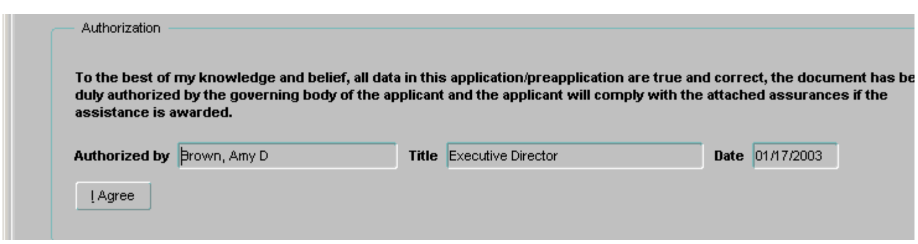


3.5.1 Authorization

The name of the person selected as the Authorized Representative on the **Applicant** tab automatically appears in the **Authorization** section on this tab. The name cannot be changed on this tab. If you need to change the name, you must do so on the Applicant Tab.

To authorize the application, complete the following steps:

1. The person who will be authorizing the application must log onto *eGrants* and access the application.
2. On the **Assurances and Certifications** tab, read the statement in the Authorization section, then click on the "I Agree" button directly below. The current date will appear in the date field.

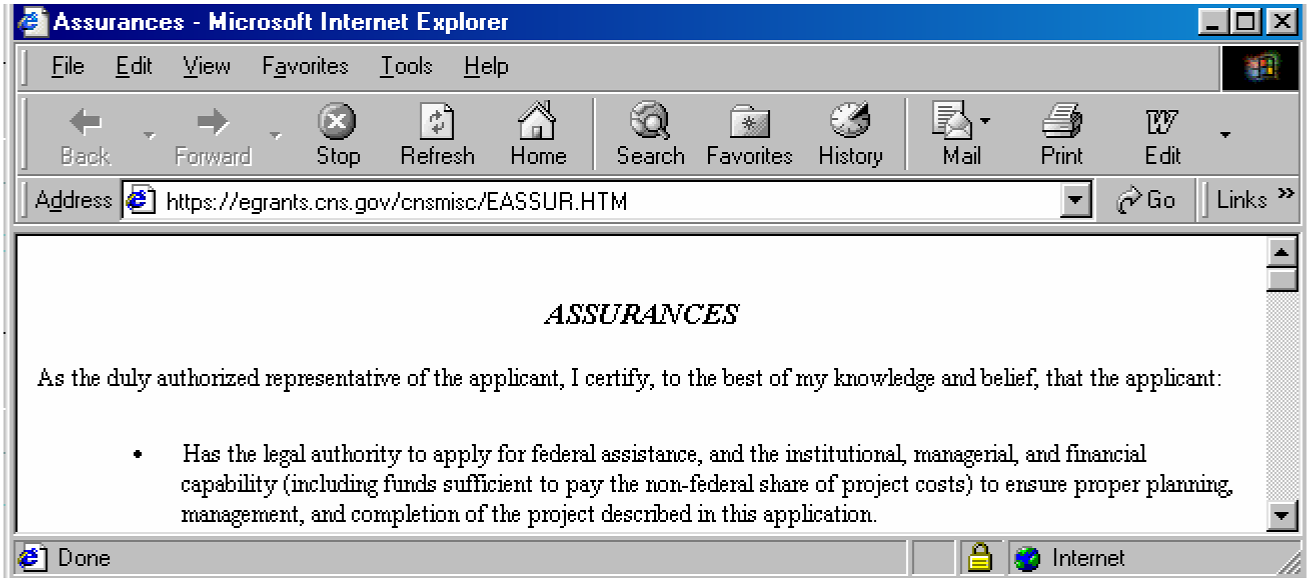


3.5.2 Assurances

The name of the person selected as the Authorized Representative on the **Applicant** tab automatically appears as the authorized certifying official for the Assurances. The name cannot be changed on this tab. If you need to change the name, you must do so on the Applicant Tab.

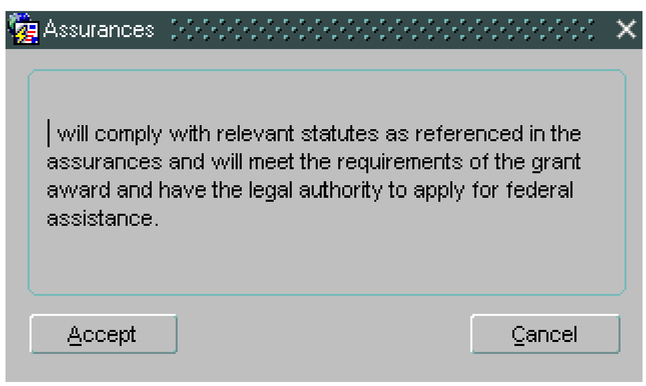
To electronically sign the Assurances, complete the following steps:

1. The authorized certifying official must log onto *eGrants* and access the application.
2. On the **Assurances and Certifications** tab, press the "**View/Print Assurances**" button. This will a open new window containing the text of the Assurances. You may print the Assurances or read them on your computer screen. When you are finished, close the window.

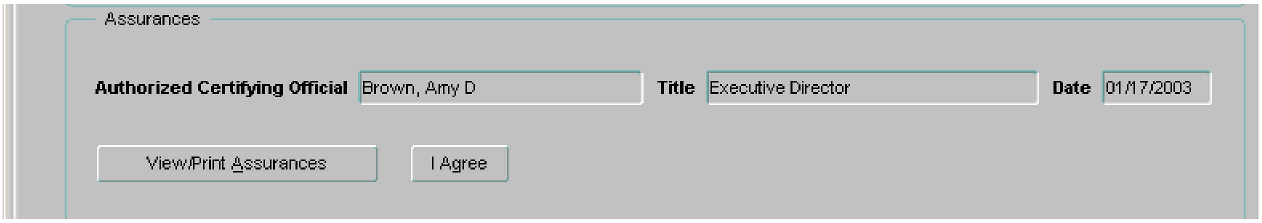


3. Click on the "**I agree**" button.

4. An assurances window will appear. Click on the "**Accept**" button.



5. The date field will be automatically filled with the current date.

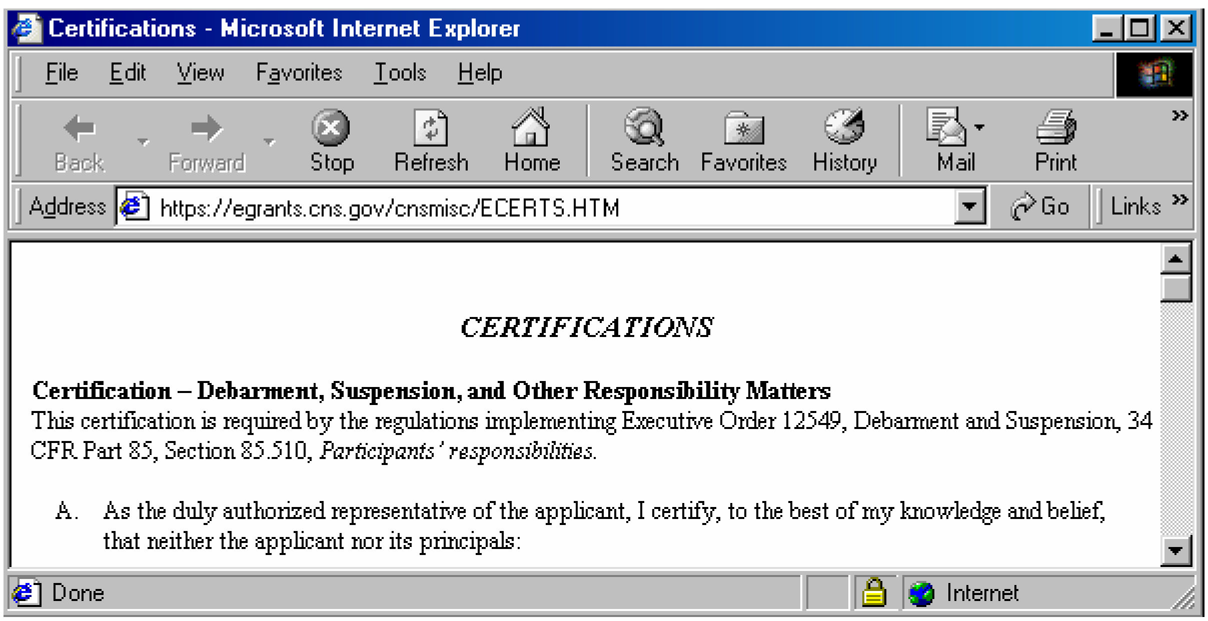


3.5.2 Certifications

The name of the authorized certifying official for the Certifications can be the same person as the authorizing certifying official for the Assurances or a different person. This person can be selected here by clicking on the arrow and selecting a person on file. If the person needed is not on file, he/she must create his/her own *eGrants* account.

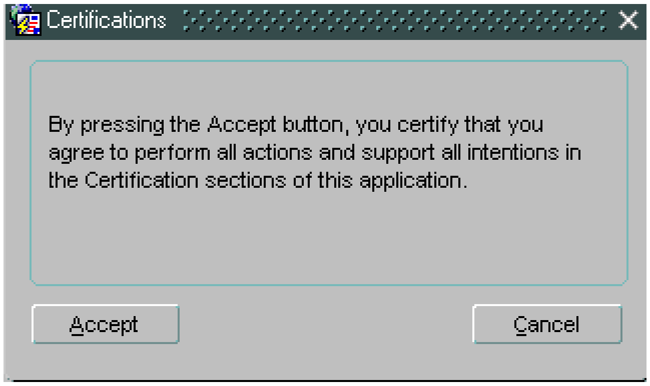
To electronically sign the Certifications, complete the following steps:

1. The authorized certifying official must log onto *eGrants* and access the application.
2. In this tab, press the "**View/Print <u>Certifications</u>**" button. This will open a new window. You may print the Certifications or read them on your computer screen. When you are finished, close the window.

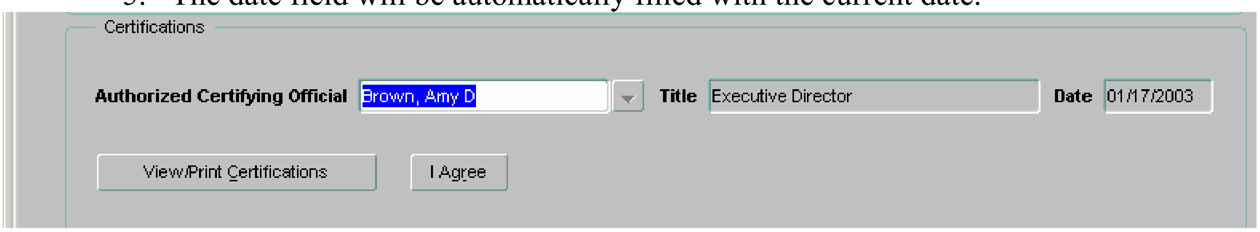


3. Click on the "**I agree**" button.

4. A certifications window will appear. Click on the "**Accept**" button.



5. The date field will be automatically filled with the current date.

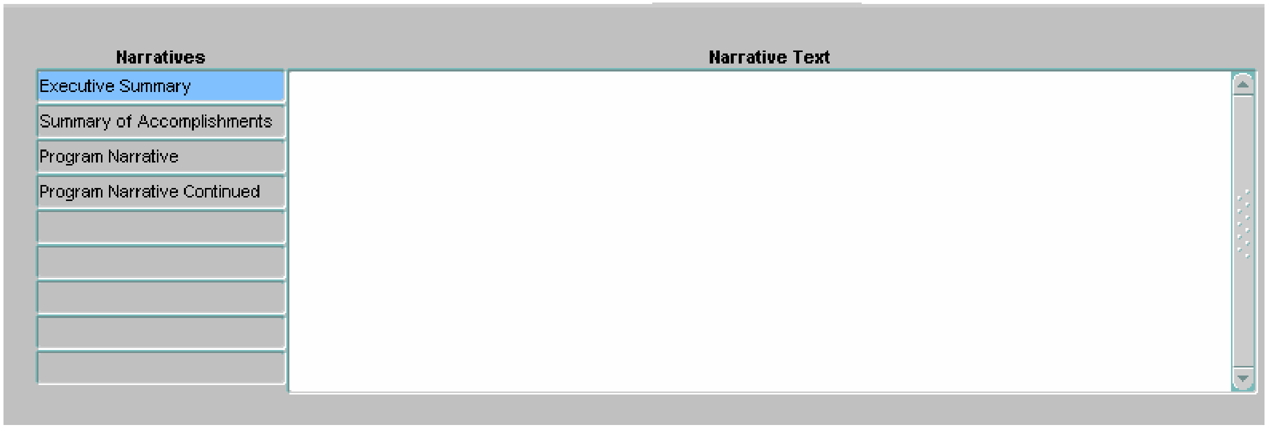


3.6 Narratives Tab

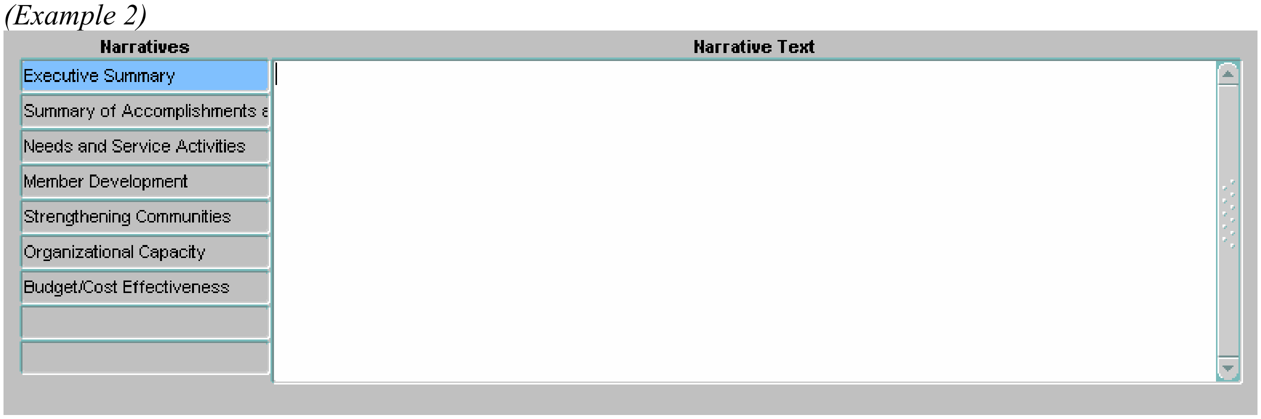
Use the **Narratives Tab** to enter your application narrative. The narrative tab of the SF 424 is divided into **Narratives** categories. The **Narratives** categories differ depending on the type of grant you are applying for. (See below for two examples) On the left of the screen you will see the categories that are required for your grant application. On the right you will see the **Narrative Text** field. A different **Narrative** Text field opens each time you click on a different **Narratives** category. For each **Narratives** category, enter your information into the **Narrative Text** field that is next to it.

Refer to your grant application instructions for guidance on what information to include in each category, the maximum number of characters allowed in each category, as well as other requirements.

(Example 1)



(Example 2)



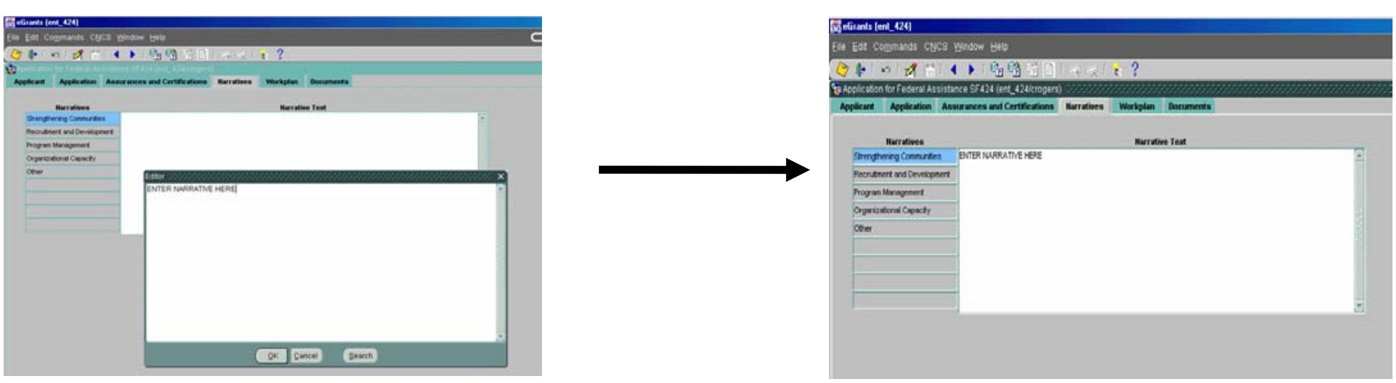
3.6.1 Entering Text

Because eGrants is not a word processor, you will find it easier to create and save your application with a word processor, and then copy and paste your application narrative into the appropriate categories. This will also minimize the chance of you losing information should you lose your Internet connection while working on your application.

There are two methods for entering text into the Narrative fields:

Method #1:

Double click on the white space to open the Editor Box. Type your narrative text into the Editor. When you are finished, click on **OK** and the text will appear in the Narrative Field.



Method #2:

Compose your narrative in a Microsoft Word (or other word processing) document and then "Copy and Paste" it into the Narrative Text field. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Compose your narrative in a Word document.
2. Log into *eGrants* and click on the **Narratives Tab**.
3. Open the Word document that contains your narrative
4. Highlight the text you want to copy
5. Go to the **Edit** menu and select "**Copy**"
6. Go to *eGrants* and put your cursor in the appropriate narrative field
7. Go to the Edit menu again and select "**Paste**."

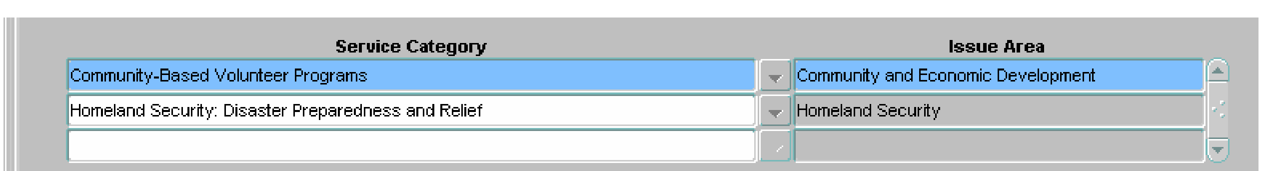
Helpful Hints:

Check the character limits for the narrative of the grant to which you are applying in your grant application instructions.
When copying and pasting information, if eGrants does not allow you to paste, you may be trying to put too much text into the field. Try the copy and paste operation again, but move smaller amounts of information at a time.
Be sure to ***Spell Check*** and **count the number of characters** in your narrative while it is in Word, eGrants cannot perform these functions.
eGrants **does not accept most formatting features.** To ensure that your information is copied correctly, ***do not use bold, italics, underlining, bullets,*** or other formatting options. Charts and tables are also not permitted in eGrants.

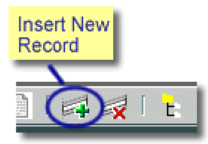
3.7 Performance Measures Tab (For AmeriCorps Program Applicants Only)

In this section you will enter your performance measures and select the service categories that apply to your program activities. The performance measures section matches the Performance Measurement Worksheet that is included in the AmeriCorps Application Instructions.

1. **Service Category** – Service categories aren't associated with particular performance measures, but rather describe your program's activities.
   a. Click the drop-down arrow in the first line to choose your first category. Either scroll down the list, or type a few letters or a word into the Find box then click the



Find button to narrow your category choices. Select as many as apply to your program.
b. You will notice that for each service category you select, the **Issue Area** field is automatically filled in.
c. To add more fields in order to select more than three service categories, click the *Insert new record* icon. Repeat for as many categories as needed.



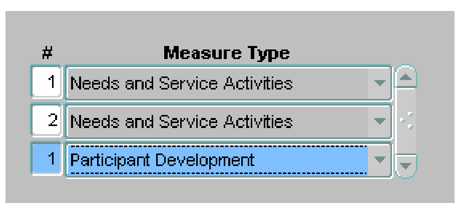
2. **Measure Type** – The next set of boxes is to record the type of performance measures you are including in your application.

   a. Put your cursor in the small box to the left of the first line. Enter the number “1” to designate your first performance measure.

   b. Move your cursor to the drop-down field to the right and select the type of your first performance measure, for example, “Needs and Activities”. Don’t worry about entering the performance measure content yet; we’ll get to that in a bit. For now, we want to make a placeholder for all your performance measures.

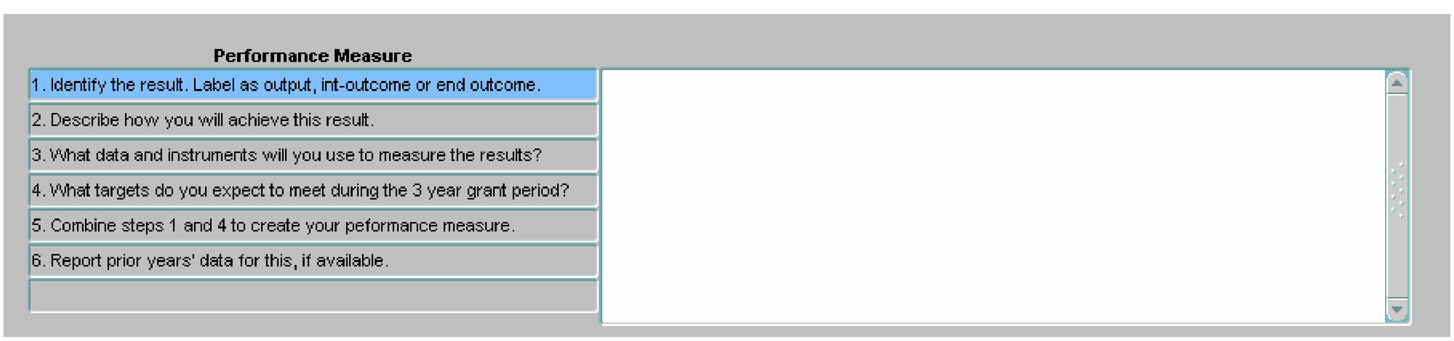
   c. Put your cursor in the small box to the left of the second line, and enter “2”. Select the type of your second performance measure in the drop-down list. For example, this might be your second “Participant Development” performance measure.

   e. Repeat as many times as necessary to enter all your performance measures.



3. **Performance Measure**

   The last set of boxes in the section labeled “Performance Measure” is where you put your performance measure content.



a. Go back up to the *Measure Type* area and highlight the first number you typed. You'll see labels in the "Performance Measure" boxes where you'll enter your content for this performance measure.

b. Highlight the first label, "Identify the result..." and enter your information in the text box to the right.

c. Highlight the second label, "Describe how you will achieve this result" and enter your information in the text box to the right.

d. Repeat until you have addressed items 1-6.

e. Repeat steps **a** through **d** for each performance measure.

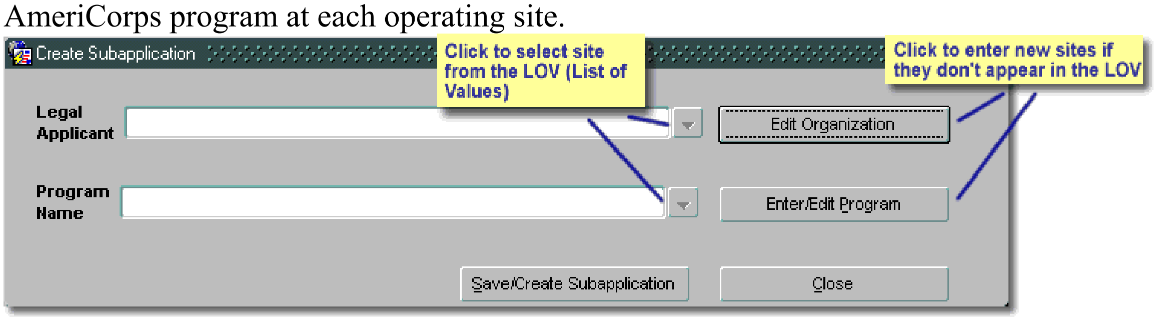
4. Save your work by clicking on the yellow disk icon in the upper left or by pressing F10.

3.8 Subapplications Tab (National Direct Applicants Only)

Here's where you enter information about your operating sites and your operating sites budgets.

a. **Click the *Create Subapplication* button** at the bottom of the screen to enter your first site. A window will pop up with the following message: *Please enter/select the organization and program names for the subapplication you are trying to create*. Click *OK*.

b. The next window contains fields for the *Legal Applicant* and the *Program Name*. *Legal Applicant* in this case refers to each organization (or subgrantee) that runs your AmeriCorps program at each operating site.



c. Click the triangle to the right of the *Legal Applicant* field to select from a list of operating sites in the LOV.

- Click the *Edit Organization* button to verify the site address, to add the organization's EIN (employer identification number) if it is missing, and to select *Characteristics*.

d. If you are a first time applicant, there will not be any sites listed.

- If your sites don't appear in the LOV, click the *Edit Organization* button and enter the site information in the window that pops up.

e. Click the triangle to the right of the *Program Name* field to select the program name.

- If the program name is not listed, click the *Enter/Edit Program* button and type the program name and contact information.

f. **Click *Save/Create Subapplication***. Then click on *Yes* in the alert window to confirm.

g. **Repeat these steps for all your operating sites**. If you run out of rows, put your cursor in any row, and click the *create record* icon. This adds a new row.

h. **The *Amount* and *FTE's* requested fields currently contain zeros**. The appropriate figures will be inherited from the budget. Next you'll need to enter budgets for each site.

i. Click on the first *Subapplicant* name and then click on *Enter/Edit Budget*.

- Complete the budget according to the Application Instructions.
- For *Section I. Program Operating Costs*, rather than filling in each line item, put your program operating cost sub-total under *Other Program Operating Costs*.
- Complete *Section II. Member Costs* and *Section III. Administrative/Indirect Costs*.
- Repeat step i for each operating site.

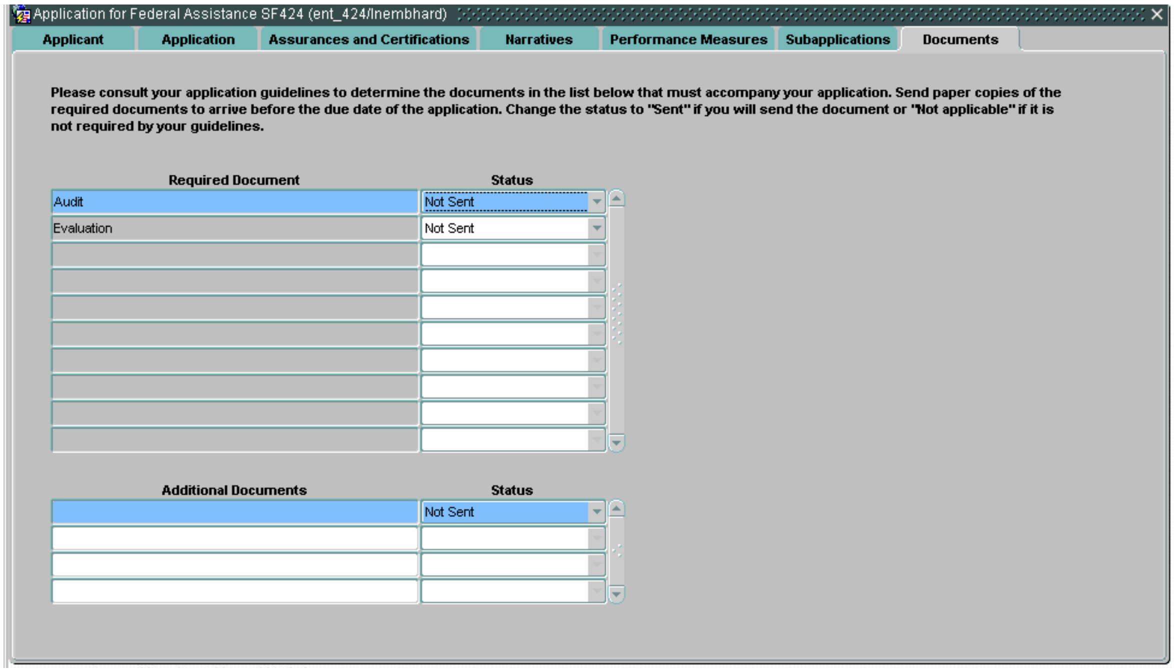
j. Once you've done that, you can change the status to “Submit to Corporation.”

k. You can disregard the Approved Budget and FTE amount and the Recommendation Summary text box. They do not apply to National Direct applicants.

l. Use the View/Print buttons to view and print site information and individual site budgets.

3.9 Documents Tab

The **Documents Tab** includes a list of the documents that are required by the Corporation for your application, but must be submitted separately from eGrants. (It is not possible to attach documents to your eGrants application).



For each listed ***Required Document***, select the appropriate status from the drop-down menu:

Select ***"Already on File"*** if the document is already on file with the Corporation and a duplicate document is not needed.

Select ***"Not Applicable"*** if your application instructions do not require that you send the document with your application.

Select ***"Sent"*** if you have sent the document listed to the Corporation.

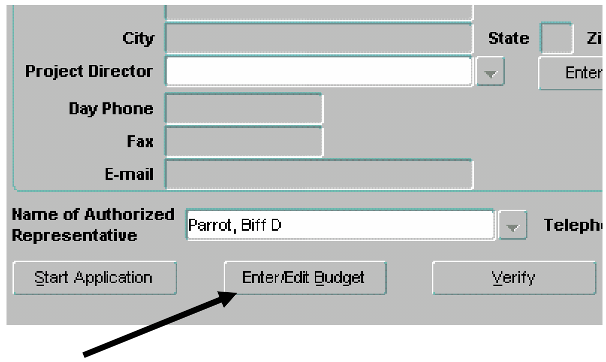
If any ***Required Document*** is listed as "***Not Sent,"*** you will not be able to Verify or Submit your application.

Refer to your application instructions for further information, including where to send the documents.

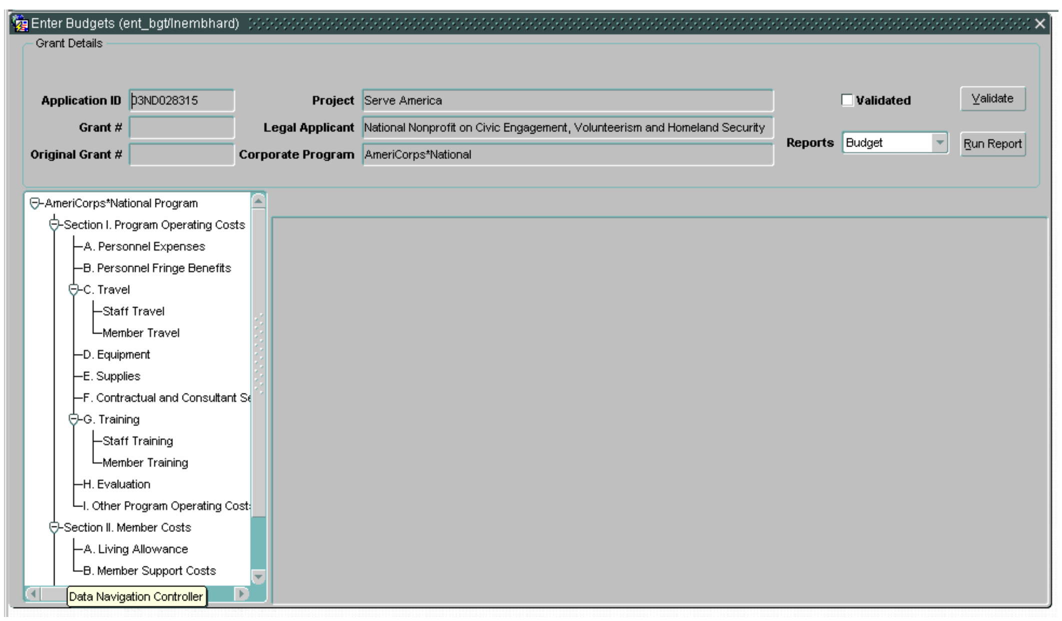
3.10 Entering a Budget

Step 1: Open the Enter Budgets Screen

To enter your budget, click on the "**Enter/Edit Budget"** button at the bottom of the **Applicant Tab**.

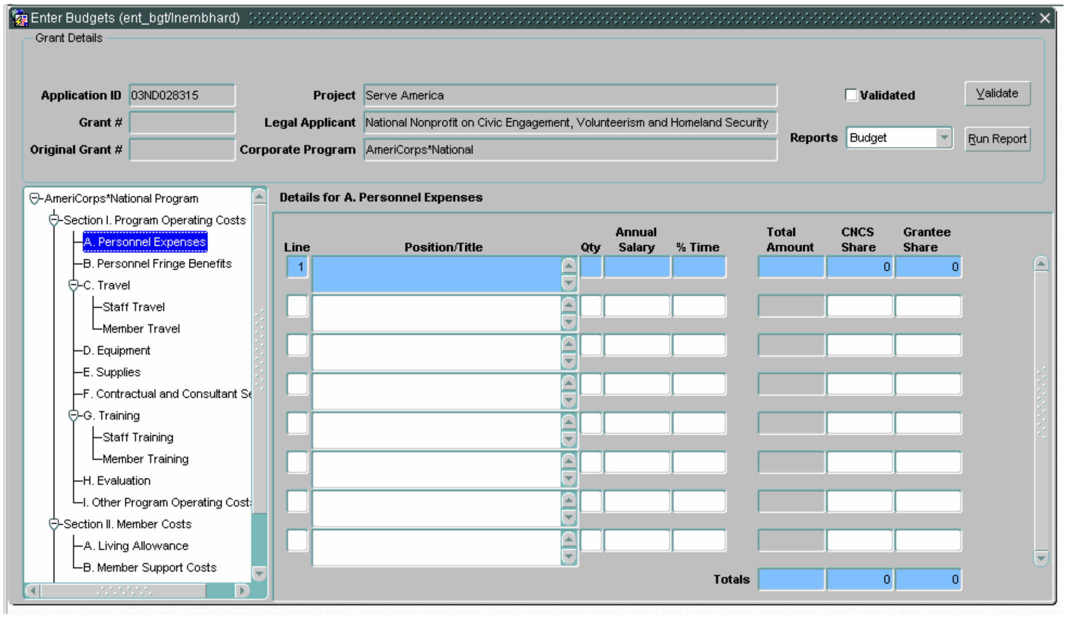


This will take you in the **Enter Budgets** screen (see below). Note that most of the screen is grayed out. This will change as soon as you highlight a budget category or sub-category.



Step 3: Enter Budget Information

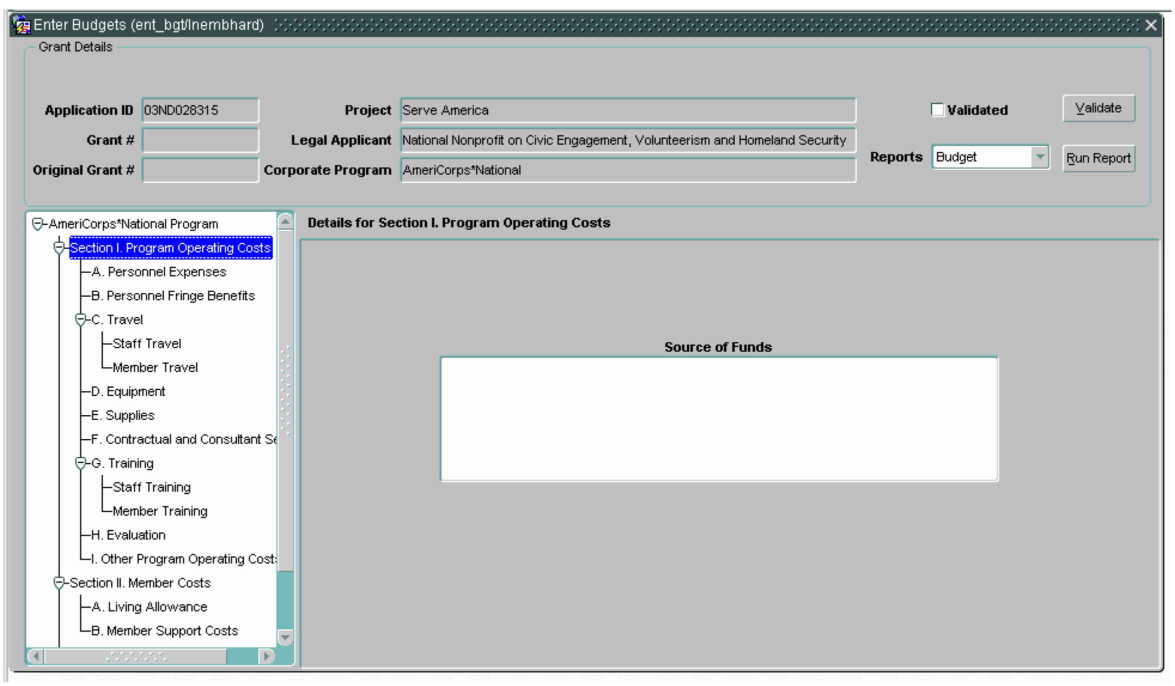
On the left side of the **Enter Budgets** screen, you will see a menu tree with a list of budget categories appropriate for your program. Select a budget category, for instance, *Personnel Expenses*, by placing your cursor over the title in the menu tree. You will notice that there are now fields on the right of the screen for you to complete with the details of your budget.



For each budget category, enter the budget details according to your application instructions. You must enter a value for the CNCS share and the Grantee share. The total of CNCS share and grantee share must equal the Total Amount.

Source of Match

When you highlight **Section I Program Operating Costs**, **Section II Member Costs**, or **Section III Administrative/Indirect Costs** in the budget menu tree, you will notice a text box appear on the right entitled **Source of Funds**. Use this text box to describe your match contribution as requested in your application instructions.



t
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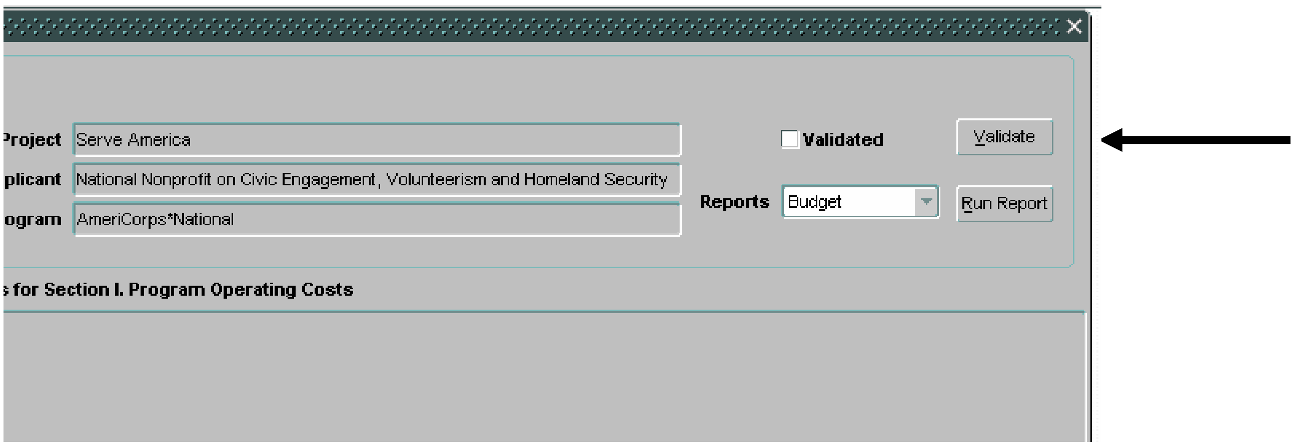
p 4: Save

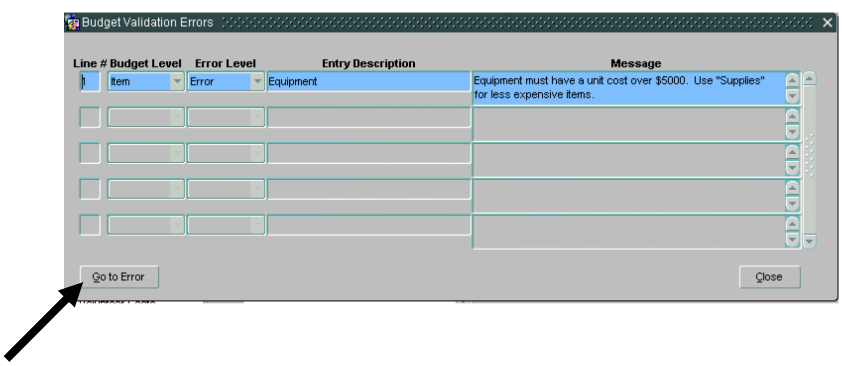
Remember to save often! You can return to this screen at any time to continue working on your budget.

Step 5: Validate the Budget

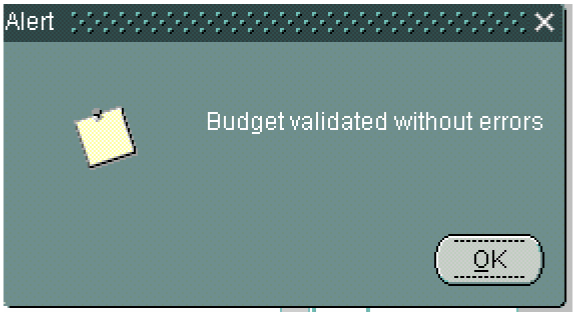
Before you can submit your application to the Corporation, you must have a valid budget that follows the guidelines for the program to which you are applying. For example, the grantee share may need to be a minimum percentage of the total amount. Before you can validate the budget, you must first **Save** and then click the **Validate** button at the top right of the screen.

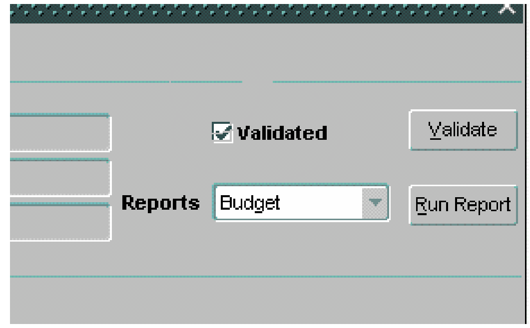


If there are any problems with the budget, a window listing the problem(s) will be displayed. Note all of the corrections that are needed.



Highlight an error in the list, click on "**Go to Error**" – which takes you to the appropriate section of the budget - and make the necessary adjustments. After you have corrected each error, attempt to validate your budget again. If your budget is valid, a message will confirm this:





Notice that the "**Validated**" checkbox is now checked. If you make any changes to the budget after validating, you will need to validate again.

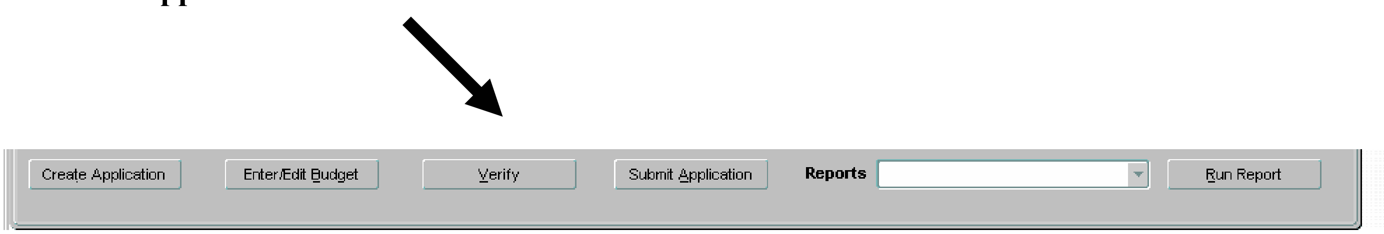
The information that you enter in this screen becomes both your budget cover sheet and your budget narrative. A separate form is not required for the budget narrative.

3.11 Submitting Your Application

3.11.1 Verifying Your Application

In order to submit your application, your application must be verified. When the system verifies your application, it is ensuring that all required sections of the application have been completed.

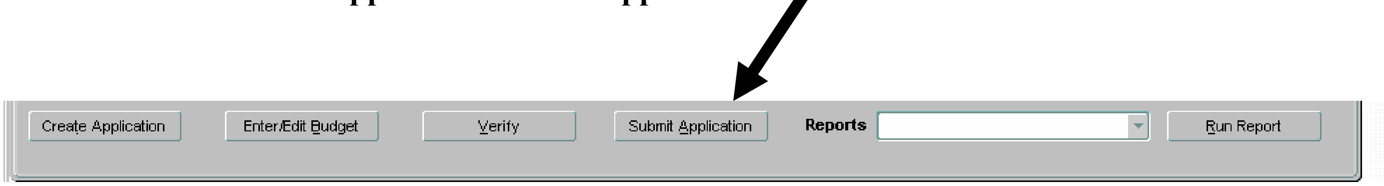
- **To verify the Application for Federal Assistance (SF424),** click on the "**Verify**" button on the **Applicant** tab.



If there are no errors, you will receive a message that there are no errors. If there are errors in your application, a box will be displayed with each error. Correct the errors and ***re-verify the application until there are no errors***.

3.11.2 Submitting Your Application

When the application is verified, submit your application to the Corporation by clicking the “**Submit Application**” button **Applicant** Tab.

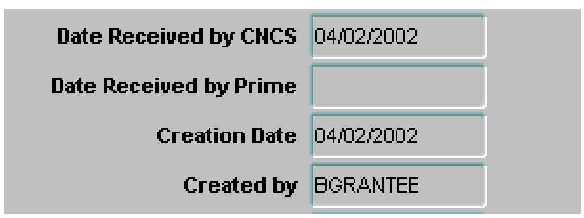


You will receive a pop-up window that says your application has been successfully submitted to the Prime, if you are a local organization applying to a State Commission, or to the Corporation if you are applying directly to the Corporation.

In addition, you will note that:

1. The status of your application changed from “Grantee Initial Entry” to “Submitted to CNCS” in the **Application for Federal Assistance** screen.

2. The date the application was submitted is entered in the “Received by CNCS” date field in the **Application for Federal Assistance** screen.



Once an application has been submitted to the Corporation you cannot make any changes to the application.